EXCHANGE

AeHN Alaska eHealth Network™

NEWS OF ELECTRONIC HEALTH TECHNOLOGY FROM ALASKA AND BEYOND

Volume 2 Summer 2010

President's Update

Alaska is moving ever closer to a unified, electronic Health Information Exchange. In this newsletter, you will meet our new Regional Extension Center Director, Jim Landon. We are pleased that Jim has agreed to join our team working with our partners to promote Electronic Health Records. AeHN is committed to assisting providers across the state with clinic workflow design, EHR implementation assistance, and strategies for achieving meaningful use.

In our efforts to connect providers, we are evaluating health information exchange (HIE) vendors. This selection process includes over twenty volunteers from across the state who agreed to participate in reviewing vendor responses to our RFP. On behalf of the AeHN Board of Directors, I want to extend thanks to this dedicated group of individuals. They have spent untold hours developing evaluation criteria and reading volumes of material supplied. AeHN and Alaska will be the better for their dedication.

The field of HIE vendors has been narrowed to four. The final vendors will demonstrate their HIE solutions at the Anchorage Sheraton on August 31 and September 1. Contact AeHN if you would like to participate in the demonstrations.

The successful vendor will connect Alaska providers via a single, secure technology platform that does not require a centralized database. Data will be managed at the site of its origination. Implementation of the HIE will begin in early 2011 with two pilot sites and move rapidly to connect additional partners who have live EHRs.

The Rural Health Care Pilot Project to connect healthcare networks across the state is also progressing. An RFP is currently being drafted utilizing FCC broadband funds to connect rural and urban non-profit health networks.

One last note: the AeHN Board recently established categories for AeHN membership and determined 2010-2011 dues levels for membership. Soon, all Alaskan health care providers will receive invitations in the mail to join AeHN and begin receiving services. I encourage you to join the network and reap the many benefits of being able to exchange critical medical information in a secure and private manner.

Paul Sherry

Paul Sherry
President

The Alaska REC and its preferred vendors will support health care providers with direct, individualized and on-site and/or remote technical assistance in:

- ☑ Conducting an EHR Readiness Assessment
- ☑ Selecting an EHR/ Contracting with Vendor
- ☑ Providing Implementation Support and Practice Workflow Design/Re-design
- ☑ Training
- ☑ Post-implementation Support Services
- ☑ Network Monitoring with preferred IT vendors

Mark Your Calendars Now!

EHR Workshop in November: 'From EHRs to Meaningful Use'

Be sure to attend this half-day workshop jammed with important information and practical demonstrations from the experts on everything from EHR implementation to meaningful use.

**Friday, November 19
BP Energy Center,
Anchorage, Alaska
8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

More information soon at www.aehra.org or www.ak-ehealth.org

Join AeHN Now to Use EHR Technical Support Services

The Alaska Regional Extension Center (REC) is Open

Alaska's Regional Extension Center, (REC), managed by the Alaska eHealth Network (AeHN), will be open for business in September, said its new director, Jim Landon. Alaska's REC is one of 60 federally-supported centers aimed at assisting providers with the adoption and effective use of electronic health records to improve healthcare outcomes and efficiencies.

Why join AeHN? Landon said that no matter where you are on the "EHR adoption curve" – from preliminary evaluation of the merits of EHRs to advanced use – AeHN can offer assistance. AeHN membership will benefit eligible providers through assistance in the evaluation and selection of either the Medicare or Medicaid EHR incentive Programs. Members will also have future access to Alaska's health information exchange (HIE) that will allow the exchange of electronic health records to provide important information to providers and patients in a timely manner. Eligible primary care providers can further benefit by receiving up to $3,000 in REC technical services to assist their practices in adopting or upgrading to certified electronic health records (EHRs) and using them effectively. These services will also be available to all other providers at lower, contracted partners' rates.

Jim Landon, Alaska's new REC Director

Although on the job for only a few months, Landon brings to the position years of healthcare management experience. He has previously held management and consulting positions in strategic planning and business development in medical centers across the country, including Washington, California, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and closer to home, at Providence Alaska. "I look forward to working with Alaska's healthcare providers, helping them to improve safety, enhance office efficiency, and implement the privacy and security benefits of electronic health records," said Landon.

To join AeHN or for more information, contact Jim at: (866) 966-9030 ext. 4, or email, jim@ak-ehealth.org

Upcoming Events You Won't Want to Miss!

Alaska Medical Group Management Association's Annual Conference

September 9 - 12, Sheraton Anchorage
Charting the Course to the Future, preceded by a half-day pre-conference seminar, *Healthcare Law: Health Reform, HITECH & Other Recent Changes*. For more information or to register, go to: www.akmgma.org.

Alaska Academy of Physician Assistants All Alaska Medical Conference 2010

October 11 – 14, Sheraton Anchorage Hotel
For conference details go to:
www.akapa.org/events/conference.php

Alaska Information Technology & Business Expo

October 18, Dena'ina Center, Anchorage
Check out the broad array of business and IT services and products for key business and industry categories with a special emphasis this year on Health IT. There will be a presentation on Alaska's health technology activities, including Alaska's preferred EHR vendors, plus relevant health technology exhibits. Attend the presentations and exhibits free with advance registration. Healthcare-related presentations will be held from Noon – 5 pm; other business presentations will be in the morning. For more information, go to www.itexpoalaska.com.

Blazing Trails In Alaska With Greenway

By: Jennifer Adams, MPH
Administrator, Alpine Urology

Alpine Urology has just begun the daunting task of implementing an EHR. We are a six-provider specialty clinic in Anchorage. Our process began in November 2008, when the group decided to have an EHR vendor selected in 2009 and to implement the EHR in 2010. To get the process started, we conducted a lot of EHR demonstrations and vendor research in 2009. Vendor selection can be an overwhelming task as there are many pros and cons to consider. To assist us in such a major decision, we worked with M@xwell IT to drill down the contracts, pricing, and features of our top three vendors. We also seriously began to look into Greenway, based on the endorsement of the Alaska EHR Alliance. January 2010, I conducted a Greenway site visit to a urology practice in Colorado Springs and was able to examine Greenway's functionality in real time in all aspects of the clinic.

In February we chose Greenway as our EHR system; what a relief it was to finally have a chosen vendor! Thanks to the work of the Alaska EHR Alliance there was no contract or pricing to negotiate. They negotiated a very thorough contract with Greenway, as well as reduced pricing, to be used by practices in Alaska. This ultimately saved us a lot of time and money.

As soon as the ink was dry, the work began. The practice management implementation came first. There were many forms to be completed and decisions to be made before our go live date of May 17th. We were also working on switching clearinghouses. Once Greenway was customized to our preferences and the schedule templates were built, they were able to convert the data from our current practice management system. The conversion was relatively seamless. Trainers from Greenway spent three days at the clinic training the staff the week before going live and stayed through our go live date. Implementation was very successful. Our staff was excited to work with Greenway, and felt the software was user friendly.

We are a little over two months into Greenway and couldn't be more pleased! The transition was more seamless than I could ever have imagined.

I was hesitant to switch practice management systems for obvious reasons, but now that it is in my rear view mirror I am happy we did and feel that having an integrated practice management system and EMR was the right choice.

We are now full speed ahead in preparing for the EMR. We again are working with M@xwell IT to identify current processes and then map out those processes in an electronic environment. Chris Dunlap, their Alaska IT Manager, is working with us to begin the process of transferring from paper to EMR. The providers are working on their templates in preparation for EMR training in mid-August and the "go live" mid-September. After the EMR is live, we will be implementing a patient portal as well as mobile access for the providers. We will then be ready to meet the meaningful use criteria.

Greenway has a great EHR and an excellent company and team standing behind it. I have worked with other vendors and Greenway by far exceeds my expectations.

In closing, the site visit was most beneficial for our vendor selection. I highly recommend clinics do a site visit to a clinic in their specialty that uses their top vendor under consideration, as that is a more honest view of the system and its capabilities. I also was very involved with our implementation team from Greenway which helped build rapport and understanding before we went live. A big thanks to the Alaska EHR Alliance and AeHN as they have done a lot for practices in Alaska by tackling some of the leg work in the daunting task of reviewing and selecting preferred EHRs. I would be more than willing to answer questions or if you want to see Greenway in a live environment; feel free to e-mail me at Jennifer@medman.com.

Local EHR Loan Packages Now Available to Providers

First National Bank Alaska is leading the way in Alaska by offering loan packages to qualified providers to help with the purchase of their EHRs. The statewide, well-respected, Alaska bank has put together a loan package or lease option from Synergy Resources. The loan package includes deferral of repayment for six months! The low interest loan will be fixed at 5.95%.

The Alaska EHR Alliance is also working with Alaska USA Federal Credit Union and Wells Fargo to develop additional local loan choices for providers and expect to have them finalized in September.

For more information about FNBA's packages, call Siri Hill, 777-5690 or Theresa Powers, 777-4684.

Q&A: Meaningful Use Final Rules

In July, the final rules to support meaningful use of EHRs and to define requirements for providers to qualify for incentive payments were announced. For more information go to: www.cms.gov/ehrincentiveprograms/35_meaningful_use.asp or www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms.

How do I become a meaningful EHR user?

An eligible provider and hospital will be considered a meaningful EHR user if they meet the following three requirements:

1. Utilize certified EHR technology in a meaningful manner;
2. Utilize certified EHR technology that is connected to provide for the electronic exchange of health information to improve the quality of healthcare such as promoting care coordination; and
3. Submit information on clinical quality measures in a form and manner specified.

What is a Qualified User of EHR technology for purposes of incentive bonuses?

For the Medicare EHR Incentive, the provider must see Medicare patients and fall under any of these provider categories: Medical and Osteopathy Doctors (MDs and DOs); Dentists (DDS, DMD), Podiatrists (DPM), Optometrists (OD), and Chiropractors (DC).

Eligible for Medicaid EHR Incentive: MD, DO, DDS, DMD, DPM, Cert. Nurse Midwives, (CNM), Nurse Practitioners (NP) & certain PAs. Medicaid requires percentages of patient volume for eligibility.

How do I register for EHR incentive bonuses and when will they be paid?

Information on registration will be available toward the end of 2010 on the CMS website at www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms. Registration will begin in January 2011. Medicare incentives are scheduled for May 2011; Medicaid incentives will be paid by the States and will also begin in 2011 but the timing will vary by State.

What is the maximum incentive an eligible professional (EP) can receive?

EPs who adopt, implement, upgrade, and meaningfully use EHRs can receive a maximum of $63,750 in incentive payments from Medicaid over six years or under Medicare, a maximum of $44,000 over five years. EPs who furnish services in a health professional shortage area are eligible for a 10% increase.